

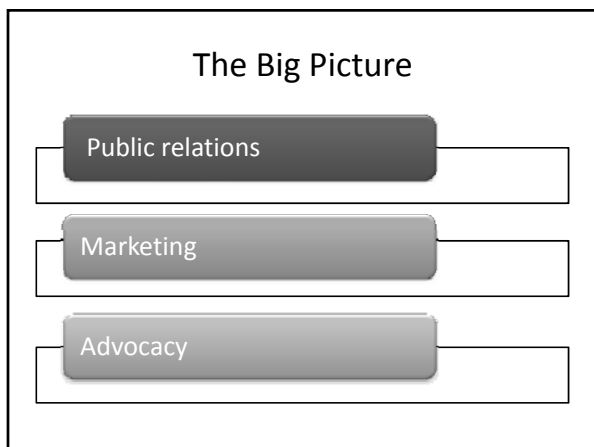
**Library Advocacy**

An Overview of the Purpose, Players, Process, Plan

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Retired Director, Middleton Public Library

**My take on advocacy**

- Library advocacy emphasizes the voice of the individual actively speaking out in support of a cause and working together with others in a formal group structure.



**Public relations**

- Says who we are & what we do
- Activities by which an organization establishes and maintains contact between itself and the people it serves.
- One-way communication (promotion)
  - Telling the library's story
  - Raising visibility
- Little consideration what target audience needs or wants to hear.

**Newsletter**

- New materials, new formats
- New services
- Programs (Calendars)
- Staff profiles
- Readers advisory
- (Community reader)
- Volunteers (recognition)

**Annual Report**

- Picture
- Personalized message
- Service highlights
- Program highlights
- Staff
- Statistics

### Program Brochures

**What/Where/When**

- Audience
- Location
- Time

**Contact information**

- Address
- Phone/Fax
- Email
- Website

### Displays

- New materials
- Recommended reading
  - Bibliographies
  - Staff reads
- Program-related
  - Storytime favorites
  - Resume workshop
- Community tie-ins
  - ("Overture" collection)

### Signage

This is just a small variety of the subject coverage we have in our collection.

### Special Services

This is what we do.....go the extra mile for you!

### Community Activities

Parades (Book cart drill)  
 Chamber social gatherings  
 School fairs  
 Job fairs

### Dress-up Day

Don't be afraid to get in character every once in awhile.


### Marketing

- Asking people what they want and how it can be delivered to them
- Two-way communication process
- Using this information to meet changing needs
- Methods of information gathering
  - Surveys (in-person, telephone, online)
  - Focus groups
  - Across-the-desk
  - Comment forms

### Log book at service desk(s)


Note comments made across the desk

- Compliments
- Collection development
- Collection display
- Fax machine
- Two-sided copies
- Color copies
- Parking
- Policy
- (In)appropriate behavior




### Comment forms: “How’re we doin’?”

- Provide a method for your customers to give you written feedback.
- Respond to selected queries, esp. when a change is in the offing.
- Topics
  - Collection development
  - Programming
  - Computers
  - Furnishings
  - Policy



### Focus groups

- Setting up the process
  - Consultant
  - Questions
  - Invitations
  - Recorder
  - Using the findings
- 1997 Middleton PL experience
  - Sunday hours
  - Services to teens
  - Quiet space
- 2007 follow-up
  - We just want more of what you’re doing.



### 2007 Focus Group Questions

1. Introductions
2. Tell us what you did during your last visit (in person or electronically) to the library.
3. What do you think the Library does really well?
4. What suggestions do you have for improving the library?

### 2007 Focus Group Questions

5. I’ve heard there’s some discussion about a branch for the Library. Do you think that’s a good idea?
6. Since the last time we held these sessions, the library facility has undergone a transformation. What do you think works well. Was anything lost?
7. Anything else? [Final say]

### Informal surveys

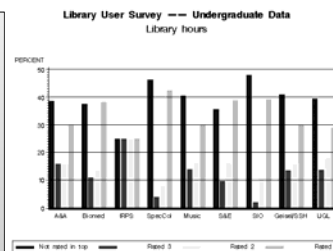
- Fill out & deposit
- “Clipboard”. Have volunteers ask questions and record responses.

Undergrad?  
Have an opinion  
about the  
UCI Libraries?  
Take our Survey  
& be entered  
in a drawing

### Formal surveys

University of San Diego libraries

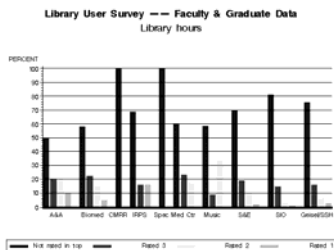
- Issue of expanded hours arose in focus group.
- Survey of undergraduates show that it's not a high priority for a large number of students. (Blue bars)



### Surveys

University of San Diego libraries

- Faculty and graduates students have a much different take on expanded hours.



### Advocacy Defined

**ad-vo-ca-cy** *n.* The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause; active support. *American Heritage Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> edition*

grass roots *pl. n.* People or society at a local level instead of the political center.

### Tied to the general

• *Advocacy is the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something...*

(“Recruiting Advocates for Information Services”)

• *Advocacy is the act of pleading for or supporting a change in an existing system....”*

(“Advocacy 101 for academic librarians”)




### Advocacy, the Library Version

- “Planned, deliberate, sustained effort to raise awareness of an issue or issues.” (Patricia M. Cavill)
- Support and understanding are built step by step.
- Uses many of the tools of public relations and marketing.
- “Your agenda will be greatly assisted by what we have to offer.”

### Elements of Advocacy

- Education
  - Inner-directed
  - Outer-directed
- Information-sharing
- Partnerships
- Legislative Days
- Public meetings
  - “Town-hall” gatherings
  - Tours, orientations
- Fundraisers
- News conferences
- Lobbying



### A closer look at lobbying

- Interaction with decision-makers
- Goal: to gain a specific objective
- Occurs at any time during legislative, policy-making, or budget process
- Attempt to influence the attitudes of a group or individual
- Appeal to target’s characteristics & interests




## National Campaigns



# @ your library®

### @ your library



- Public relations, marketing, or advocacy?
- Primary purpose is to raise the profile of libraries.
- Uses of various media & “branding”
- Done in a repetitive and consistent manner
- Telling the American public what libraries do



## Other @ examples

## Other @ examples

**Grassroots activities that set the stage for advocacy**

- Be approachable
- Welcome people to your library (smile & make eye contact)
- Provide optimum service
- Ask people, "Did you find what you were looking for?"
- Build strong, positive word-of-mouth advertising



**Grassroots activities that set the stage for advocacy**

- Encourage people to use library services
- Share personal stories about how libraries benefit peoples' lives.
- Voice your support for libraries and encouraging others to do the same.



**Provide Feedback**

- Express your support (and thanks, when appropriate) to a mayor, council members, school principals or board members, as well as county, state, and federal elected officials.

**Ramping it up a bit**

- Write or call legislators and decision-makers to let them know you want them to support libraries.
- Speak out as an individual ("Comments from citizens present")
- Attend hearings on library-related matters. Ask questions, voice your opinions, look for support.



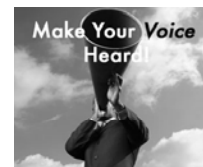
**Getting your advocacy wings**

- Attend legislators' "town meetings". Better yet, having your library host one.
- Participate in an organized campaign for a specific project (new building, addition, expanded services, etc.)
- Participate in regional, state, and national Library Legislative Days.
- Back/endorse candidates who demonstrate strong support for libraries.




**Rule of 10**

- That's the number of contacts it takes to make an official really sit up and take notice.
- The more people who speak out, the stronger the voice of libraries.




### The Players & their Roles

- Trustees/Regents/Board members
- Friends
- Director/Administrative Staff
- Other Staff Members
- Library users
- “Influentials”




### How Trustees Contribute

- Use political savvy and connections on behalf of the library.
- Make a point of getting to know key officials. Stay in touch even when not asking for something.
- Work closely with library administration and staff in developing advocacy messages and strategies.




### How Trustees Contribute

- Join the American Library Trustee Association (ALTA) and state association's trustee section to stay informed about the bigger picture of libraries.
- Be prepared to respond to questions that might arise about library matters, especially any sensitive issues.
- Be available to speak to groups or the media.




### How Trustees Contribute

- Share insights on how best to communicate library needs to the broader community and decision-makers.
- Make a point of recognizing legislators and business, campus and community leaders who have supported the library.



### How Friends of Libraries Contribute

- Work in cooperation with the library administration & board.
- Build public awareness & support for the library.
- Make friends with key decision-makers. Invite them to speak to your Friends group or be guests of honor at special events.




### How Friends Contribute

- Publish updates about library issues and suggestions for supporting them in your newsletter.
- Recruit others to join the Friends and to speak out for libraries.
- Thank or recognize officials who support the library. Make them honorary Friends. Feature them in the Friends' newsletter.



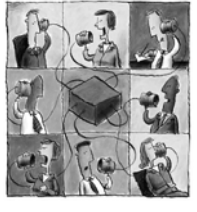
### How Friends Contribute

- Let library administrators know about concerns—and compliments—you hear from others.
- Testify at hearings in support of the library.
- Raise funds to help raise awareness and build support for the library.




### How the Director Contributes

- Be enthusiastic and positive. Encourage others to speak out. Thank them for their support.
- Recruit and work closely with community leaders, encouraging their involvement and interest in the library.
- Communicate regularly with key community/ campus/school leaders to keep them current with library issues.




### How the Director Contributes

- Keep library board members, staff, Friends and users informed of library needs and concerns. Provide updates, messages, training and suggestions to help them support the library.
- Maintain your advocacy network. Invite library users and others to testify at budget hearings, participate in media interviews, and visit legislators.



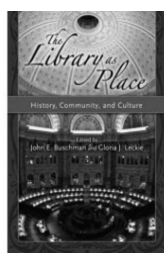
### How the Director Contributes

- Participate in regional/statewide library networks. Use the strengths of local network to enhance effectiveness of larger organizations.
- Participate in influential community or campus groups and use these opportunities to get library message out and recruit advocates.
- Maintain a VIP list to receive the library's newsletter, the annual report, and other special mailings.




### How the Director Contributes

- Work at keeping a high profile for your library. Develop a marketing communication plan with a strong, consistent message.
- Don't create a crisis when one doesn't exist.



### How All Staff Contribute

- Know the library's message and be prepared to answer/refer questions you might get.
- Ask library users, your family, friends and neighbors to help spread the word.
- Be on the alert for good library user stories in your daily work. Collect them and forward to the appropriate person.
- Be a walking, talking billboard for libraries. Wear t-shirts, hats, and/or other accessories that are pro-library.



### How all staff contribute

- Use a library message as part of your e-mail signature.
- Look for new and creative ways of delivering the message—on the job and off.
- Listen and provide feedback to library administrators on issues/concerns that you may hear about.
- Keep current. Make a point of reading library updates so you can be knowledgeable.
- Provide friendly, helpful, and courteous service at all times.



### How Others Contribute



- Library users
  - Collect and use their testimonials to show how the library makes a difference.
  - Build an e-mail list to share information/alerts
- Influentials
  - Identify Community/school/campus leaders as library spokespersons
  - Appreciate non-users who place a high value on libraries.



### Here's our situation

Questions, comments, feedback